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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to focus their coverage August 10 on former DPP Chairman Shih Ming-teh's efforts to oust President Chen Shui-bian; investigations into the details of the Presidential Office's special state affairs expense account; the resignation of the Minister of Transportation and Communications; and Super Typhoon Saomai, which skirted Taiwan today. The pro-unification "United Daily News" front-paged a photo of tearful Shih and a story with the headline "Shih Ming-teh Stays Firm on Ousting Bian." The pro-status quo "China Times," on the other hand, ran a banner headline on page seven with the headline "Secret Meeting with Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah; James Huang Touches Sensitive Nerve of U.S.-Israel Alliance."

¶2. In terms of editorials, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, urged the Taiwan government to create a broader space for itself in the international community by using new diplomatic thinking, and to push the island's UN bid by using the name of Taiwan. A "China Times" editorial, on the other hand, called on Premier Su Tseng-chang to continue the "Su revisionism" and move toward the middle course. End summary.

A) "Taiwan Must Create Broad Space in International Community Using New Diplomatic Thinking"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (8/10):

"... Taiwan must no longer entangle itself on the battlefield of cash diplomacy. It must have new pragmatic thinking to avoid unnecessary waste of resources and to create a broader space for itself in the international community. The significance of new diplomatic thinking lies primarily on changing Taiwan's mentality, which attaches too much importance to the number of its diplomatic allies; instead, Taiwan should put its emphasis on showing its energy in the international community. In other words, the government should abandon formalism, and focus its diplomatic work on strengthening the island's substantive relations with the United States, Japan, and European countries, rather than wasting its valuable resources on countries that barely have any influence in the international community. Also, Taiwan's previous attempts to join the United Nations using the name of the 'Republic of China' were nothing but a mockery, a waste of energy and time. Thus, we should apply the pragmatic diplomacy principle on Taiwan's UN bid, too. In short, Taiwan must be pragmatic with its diplomatic strategies, no matter whether it is about making more friends or joining the international organizations. Taiwan must adjust its priorities with regard to building substantive foreign relations and formalism, so that it can get out of the diplomatic quagmire and face a turning point of extensive opportunities."

B) "Why Not Give Su's Revisionism One Last Chance?"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000]
editorialized (8/10):

"... For the currently low-spirited Green camp, what 'Su's revisionism' stands for is definitely an asset rather than a liability; it provides multiple possibilities for the Green camp to get out of the dead end of its ideology. One must know that Chen Shui-bian was able to win the presidential elections in 2000 in a less promising situation mainly because of the vision created by his 'new middle course.' Even though he chose to back down from the 'middle course' afterwards, this line remains to be operational. 'Su's revisionism,' likewise, offers an operational possibility. But the fact that the DPP members are vying to get rid of the 'revisionist' line now is akin to blocking all the possibilities for Su to move toward the middle course.

"Surely we are watching how Premier Su is going to face this test. It is absolutely impossible to ask Beijing to extend a goodwill gesture to Taiwan in future diplomatic battles across the Taiwan Strait; neither is it likely to ask the Green camp to put aside its assertion of fundamentalism. Yet the time and tide for globalization wait for no one. If Su, who upholds pragmatism, decides to put out the fire of his revisionist line, it will be tantamount to missing the chance to walk out of Chen's shadow hovering over him."

YOUNG